

Carbon Monoxide

What is Carbon Monoxide?

Carbon Monoxide (CO) is an odorless, colorless gas. It prevents the body from using oxygen, which can cause damage to the heart, brain, and other organs - even death. Because it is invisible and has no smell, people often do not realize that they are breathing CO.

Carbon Monoxide Poisoning in Vehicles

NEVER RUN YOUR CAR OR TRUCK UNTIL IT IS COMPLETELY CLEARED OF SNOW AND ICE, INCLUDING THE UNDERCARRIAGE. If a vehicle is left running in an enclosed space, or if the tailpipe is blocked by snow or ice, CO can build up in the car and create a very dangerous situation.

- Be sure to clear at least 1 foot of snow all around and under your motor vehicle, including the tailpipe, before starting it.
- Keep your car windows open to allow for fresh air when warming up your car.

Symptoms

Early symptoms of CO poisoning are feeling drowsy, confusion, headaches, fainting, and dizziness. People often do not realize that they are exposed until they are seriously ill.



Other Sources of Carbon Monoxide

- ♦ Gas ranges, ovens, and clothing dryers
- ♦ Gas and oil heating systems
- ♦ BBQ grills and fireplaces
- ♦ Gas/propane space heaters
- ♦ Blocked or damaged flue pipes
- ♦ Cars and trucks

Protect Yourself from CO Poisoning.

- DO keep air intakes for heating systems and appliances clear of obstructions.
- DO be sure that any generators are placed at least 20 feet from your home.
- DO keep all oil- and gas-fired heating systems and appliances well maintained and have them inspected and cleaned yearly. Keep exhaust vents clear of snow and debris.
- DO install a CO detector (available at any hardware or home improvement store). The Boston Fire Department requires that all homes and apartments with a potential source of CO must have a working CO alarm installed in each apartment and on each occupied floor.
- DON'T warm your car up in a garage with the door closed.
- DON'T heat your house with your stove, oven, or gas/propane space heaters.
- DON'T operate any combustion engine indoors.

**If you experience symptoms, or your CO detector goes off:
Leave immediately and call the Fire Department at 911**

